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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the state role in enhancing teaching and learning in colleges and universities particularly focusing on the relatively recent attempts by states to increase attention to quality and to initiate activities to define, measure, and fund quality in education. The paper begins by exploring the growing state interest in quality, the struggle to define quality in which the states are engaged, and the key players in determining state policy initiatives. The next section reviews recent state legislative activity, state master or comprehensive plans for higher education, and other state policy actions in order to understand in more detail what will be taught, how it will be taught, and who will be teaching. A third section explores motivations for state initiatives and actions including economic development and workforce competitiveness, the education reform movement, and continued claims of deterioration in student achievement. The next section discusses some of the unintended outcomes of efforts to improve quality. A final section assesses whether state action will in fact improve teaching and learning and concludes that this is difficult to measure and remains to be seen. This section also explores questions of inappropriate intrusion. Included are 23 references. (JB)

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Interest in Teaching and Learning Stems from Concerns for Quality

> Many states are looking for ways to become involved in the outcomes of higher education within their borders. Quality is the byword, as states recognize that a strong system of higher education is as vital to a state's well-being and growth as strong primary and secondary schools. But what role should a state play in the life of its colleges and universities ("Rising Expectations...," 1985, p. 13).

So begins the lead article in a 1985 Change magazine in which states asked: are colleges making the grade? Though certainly not the first to explore the quality issue, the series of articles in this issue of Change captured the growing concern for quality in higher education and the interest by state policy leaders in assuring improvement.

The interest in quality is certainly not new, but the notion that state officials could (and should) have direct impact on attention to quality and to initiate activities to define, measure, and fund for quality is new. States have always been concerned about the quality of their educational institutions; after all, education is the single greatest responsibility of states. However, state pride in education has given way in recent years to questions: fact has replaced faith in discussions of educational quality.

To assure the continuing success of American education there is general agreement that action is necessary; this stems from a concern that

> the undergraduate curriculum may no longer meet the needs of the time--particularly the twin challenges of international economic competition and the need to improve the quality of national life. Behind this concern is a growing recognition that undergraduate students often are not being taught as well as they might be. The national debate centers on curricular reform, the quality of teaching, and the assessment of educational outcomes (Quehl, 1988, p. 9).

Throughout the eighties we were bombarded by report after report pointing to declining achievement by students, abilities of teachers, and the effectiveness of an entrenched system. As policymakers and citizens, we have demanded more accountability for the outcomes of the educational process. Accountability--long debated in American higher education--has evolved

from fiscal accountability to program accountability and finally to accountability for student achievement.

To understand the state role in enhancing teaching and learning in colleges and universities, four broad areas will be discussed. First, this paper will explore the growing state interest in quality, the struggle to define quality in which the states are engaged, and identifying the key players in determining state policy intitiatives. Next, based on reviews of recent state legislative activity, state master or comprehensive plans for higher education, and other reviews of state policy actions, suggest the level of state activity affecting (1) what will be taught? (2) how it will be taught? and (3) by whom will it be taught?.

Third, motivations for state initiatives and actions will be explored. And finally, some of the unintended outcomes of efforts to improve quality will be discussed.

Growing State Interest in Quality

Education--at all levels--came under closer scrutiny in the 1980s as our faith in the quality and capacity of our educational institutions eroded in the face of damning reports. The era of concern was launched with A Nation at Risk (National Study Commission, 1983) and was quickly followed by a wide variety of reports attacking K-12 education written by study groups and blue ribbon on both the national and states levels. National concern for quality in higher education was launched with Involvement in Learning (Study Group, 1984), To Reclaim a Legacy (Bennett, 1984) and Integrity in the College Curriculum (American Association of Colleges, 1985) among others. Almost without exception, these reports call for increased attention to the quality of undergraduate education, point to the eroding balance between teaching and research, call for an understanding of the college/university role in economic development, and support the continuing need for mission clarification.

The messages of these reports were not lost on state officials. In their own studies during the same period they found evidence to suggest that student achievement had eroded on a number of measures, that increased remediation was needed, that teaching assistants provided the bulk of teaching in a student's first two years in many universities, that promotion and

tenure decisions as well as teaching loads favored research faculty, and more. As states stirred to action, the Education Commission of the States convened a working group on the state role in improving undergraduate education. The report of that group (Boyer, 1986) reported that states faced the challenges of improving assessment and motivating and rewarding faculty for improving undergraduate education. Specifically, they recommended that (1) improving undergraduate education be put on the public agenda, (2) improving undergraduate education be placed in the context of comprehensive state strategies for educational excellence, (3) colleges and universities be enabled to improve undergraduate education, and (4) multiple methods of assessment be employed to measure student and institutional improvement. Ewell (1985), also writing on behalf of the Education Commission of the States, suggested that in the climate for educational improvement, two state roles emerge. First, state regulatory and funding mechansims should create an appropriate climate and set of incentives for inducing institutional self-improvement, and second, states should monitor the performance of the higher education system by collecting appropriate measures of effectiveness.

In the mid-eighties, the interest in the improvement of educational quality was general, exploring any structure or mechanism which might be employed. State action--we will learn--has made progress on a number of these recommendations. More recently, interest in the quality of undergraduate education has focused on the research-orientation of faculty and of promotion and tenure systems which are believed to have eroded teaching quality. Lynne Cheney, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in a recent report on the status of humanities in America, decries the overemphasis of research and undervaluing of teaching in college and university faculties, suggests revisions to curricula, to promotion and tenure policies, and restoring the pre-eminence of teaching (Cheney, 1990). In a similar vein, Ernest Boyer has recently studied scholarship in light of renewed interest in undergraduate education, offering, "let's agree that the 1990s will be the decade of undergraduate education (Boyer, 1990, p. xiii)." While echoing Cheney (1990) and others on the overemphasis of research and productivity measures in faculty advancement, Boyer's study suggests that faculty too are trapped by the current system: he finds that more than 60% of today's faculty feel that teaching effectiveness, not publication, should be the primary criterion in advancement. New

and broader definitions of scholarship are proposed: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching.

What is Quality?

As states have sought to address the quality issue, their most formidable task has been in defining quality; any number of groups have struggled its elusive definition. Early attempts at identifying the characteristics of quality led to measures of prestige or resource measures: SAT scores of applicants, faculty research productivity, numbers of Fulbright Scholars, endowments, library collections, economic development activities, state appropriations, and the like. More recent efforts have sought to measure outcomes as well as inputs and attempt to evaluate impact.

State efforts to operationalize quality have attempted to tie funding to quality outcomes, as recommended by Ewell (1985). According to Hines (1988), one strategy links funding to demonstrated outcomes while the other strategy is to provide incentive funding for specific practices. Tennessee's Performance Funding Program, which defined performance objectives (including assessment) and developed measures that are a part of the formula budgeting process, is an example of the former. Virginia's Fund for Excellence, in which institutions competed for grants to improve quality, and New Jersey's use of competitive and challenge grants to support quality initiatives, are examples of the latter. Skinner and Tafel (1986) provide a detailed examination of Ohio's Program Excellence, established in 1983.

Focusing more closely on teaching and learning, states and institutions have recently devoted efforts to assess student learning. Hutchings and Marchese (1990) report on a ECS/AAHE study finding that 82% of campuses have assessment activities underway and that nearly 40 states are actively promoting assessment.

Who Is Trying to Assure Quality?

Seemingly, everyone is attempting to assure that our higher education institutions are quality ones: governors, legislatures, governing or coordinating boards, accrediting and licensing

groups, and business and citizen groups. All but the last of these have the ability--through legislation, executive action, or board policy--to shape institutional activities in pursuit of improved quality. Some of this interest has been spurred by the topic itself; the other is perhaps due to the increasing sophistication of governors, legislators, and the coordinating and governing boards and their staffs (ECS/SHEEO, 1989).

Gubernatorial interest and capacity to address and direct issues in higher education continues to grow. Governors have grabbed much of the education spotlight for the past several years and are increasingly staffed by individuals charged with responsibilities over higher education efforts, most notably the role of higher education in economic development and, more recently, quality in the higher education system. Once rarely a topic of speeches, higher education is increasingly a topic of inaugural addresses, budget presentations, and efforts to promote a state economically. According to Hines (1988), during the eighties, governors emerged as visible, active policymakers with significant influence on higher education.

There is more involvement by the states in college and university affairs simply because of the growing capacity of states. State legislatures have more and better staff than before. Today, most state legislatures meet in annual sessions, a growing number meet year round, and the staffs of legislatures have grown to more than 25,000 full and part-time employees, many with responsibilities for bill drafting, evaluation, research and analysis (Newman, 1987). Martorana and Garland (1990), in their annual review of legislation affecting two year colleges, document the growing interest of legislatures in establishing policy in a variety of areas.

Like their counterparts in the legislative arena and the governor's office, coordinating and governing boards (and their staffs) are increasingly well-informed and active participants in the policymaking process for higher education. The number of statewide coordinating and governing boards has grown rapidly with Wyoming now being the only state without such a structure (Hines, 1988). With their growth has been a concomitant growth in staff and powers, with recent actions in a number of states designed to strengthen their role.

Suffice it to say, the policymaking arena for higher education has become increasingly complex and multi-faceted. With an increasing number of players in this arena, there have been

growing fears that the potential for conflicts between the state and the university have increased. The number and range of laws, regulations, standards, and policies which govern the operation of institutions continues to grow. No longer focusing largely on finance, increasingly administrative procedures, relationships with faculty and students, personnel policies, and even academic policies are shaped by state policymakers. This level of involvement may prove to be counter-productive and intrusive. Newman (1987), in his study of state-university conflict suggests:

> At best, the relationship between the state and the state university is an appropriate effort by those elected and appointed to state office to set goals, allocate resources, hold accountable and encourage those who govern the state university. We have called this appropriate public policy. Inappropriate intrusion is characterized by attempts by those in state government (or the university) to interfere with the operation of the university either to serve the ends that are questionable in themselves or to serve ends that may or may not be appropriate through means that are questionable (p. 2).

Newman further identifies three forms of inappropriate intrusion:

- Bureaucratic: the accumulated weight of unnecessay or counterproductive regulations, which is the most common form of inappropriate intrusion
- Political: the exercise of raw political power for self-interest rather than public interest, which is an important deterrent to quality in a minority of states
- Ideological: the attempt to impede university activity on ideological grounds, which now seldom occurs as a result of state actions (p. 2)

The number of players in the policymaking process for higher education as well as concerns for the effectiveness of governance and financing mechanisms have led more states to launch reviews of their higher education systems. Charged by legislators, governors, coordinating and governing boards, and business and citizen groups, these study groups and commissions have attempted to assess higher education and make recommendations for change. While most reports have attempted a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and opportunities for higher education, increasing attention has focused on specific efforts to improve the quality of the educational process.

Hyer and Grace (1986) studied 26 blue ribbon commission reports produced in 23 states between 1981 and 1986. While governance and finance issues dominated these studies (representing 29.9% of recommendations), quality issues (developing incentives, program review, outcomes assessment, faculty development and evaluation) accounted for 18.6% of

all recommendations. Viewing historical trends in planning documents over three decades, Garland and Hunter (1987) found increasing attention to similar quality issues.

Not surprisingly, state interest in the quality of the educational enterprise has been framed by these reports and their recommendations. While the history of recommendations becoming active state policy--through the actions of legislatures, governors, coordinating or governing boards--varies across the states, these reports are significant in the agendas they set for policymakers. Typically, these reports establish aggressive agendas designed to promote quality, assure access, and improve student achievement, and enable continued economic development. A careful reading of the reports suggests they often propose contradictory goals: access over quality; quality over access; or economic development efforts at the expense of instructional quality.

A Typology of State Initiatives Affecting Teaching and Learning

To determine the range and type of state initiatives with direct implications for teaching and learning, the author relied on (1) his annual review (with Martorana, 1984-present) of state legislation with impact on community, junior, and technical colleges; (2) his ongoing review of comprehensive state planning documents; and (3) policy reviews by such organizations as the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) among others. Please note that in reviewing community college legislation, most states report legislation with impact on all of postsecondary education. Further, state planning documents--while proposing new program initiatives--also provide considerable detail on existing programs designed to foster quality, access and economic development. This review, though far short of exhaustive or comprehensive, should prove illustrative.

The typology proposed here, unlike others, focuses on initiatives in place with direct implications on teaching and learning. Most surveys or reviews of initiatives designed to improve the quality of education provide listings of proposed and established efforts, catching widely all efforts with direct or indirect outcomes affecting quality (e.g., Kozloff, 1985). In the typologies presented, proposed changes in policy are grouped with actual program changes

or initiatives. Likewise, initiatives with indirect implications on the quality of education (i.e. funding formula changes, articulation agreements) are included with those that have direct implications for quality (i.e. outcomes assessment, testing programs). For that reason, only those initiatives deemed as having direct implications in the classroom are included. State actions can be grouped into three broad areas: **what is to be taught? by whom it is to be taught? and how should it be taught?** Where appropriate, activities with potential impact are mentioned.

What Is to Be Taught? Actions by state policymakers have been most active in this area. Through a variety of mechanisms and structures, state policy decisions by a variety of actors have direct influences on curricula. Generally, this is accomplished through the establishment of outcomes criteria which eventually shape the curricula. In some areas, state establishment of outcomes criteria has occurred for some time while in other program areas, such state involvement is quite new. There are however, some state initiatives--quite broad in scope--that directly involve the state in the determination of curricula.

One area where state involvement has occurred for some time is in the determination of teacher preparation curricula. In most states, teacher preparation programs are approved by the department of education according to regulations of the state board of education. These activities have the effect of determining course or competency minimums for those programs that would be approved. Recent interest in the quality of teachers has led states to review the criteria for approved programs, increase standards of proficiency, and to establish or strengthen programs designed to insure the competence of novice teachers. Over 40 states now have in place testing programs (largely using national tests such as the National Teacher Exam), to measure the outcomes of teacher preparation programs and make initial certification subject to the successful completion of a testing program. Virtually all states in the past several years have focused attention on this area and have sought to increase state scrutiny and have acted to make changes.

In a related vein, states have traditionally been active in setting standards for curricula in other areas leading to licensure, such as cosmetology, nursing, and counseling. Through

state boards charged with assuring the competence of those who would practice such professions, outcomes are determined and tests are developed to measure those outcomes. Along with specialized accrediting associations, curricula in these program areas tend to be similar within and across the states. Specific state action to increase the rigor of these programs or competencies has occurred in most states in recent years, particularly in nursing and allied health areas. Because of the specific state role in licensure in these professional and paraprofessional areas, state involvement is expected though not always welcomed.

Perhaps as an extension to the state role in the certification of teachers, nurses, and others, but most certainly because of growing concern for what students are learning, state action in outcomes assessment has been most visible in the past decade. According to a recent study, close to forty states are active in the promotion of outcomes assessment. Alverno College's competency-based curricula was an early example of an assessment-oriented curricular design. More recently, Northeast Missouri State University's assessment program received national attention in the mid-eighties. It was however, the initiation of Florida's system-wide "rising junior" exams that the state role in outcomes assessment became most debated and feared: debated because of its assurance for accountability to the tax and tuition-paying public and feared because of the potential intrusion into campus curricular decision-making.

Perhaps because of the complexity of determining statewide standards to measure through testing, the early fears of large, monolithic testing systems have not been realized. Mandatory statewide testing models have given way to a more permissive path: one in which each public institution is required to engage in assessment according to its own plan, consistent with mission and clientele, with required reports focusing on evidence that findings of assessment strategies have been put to use (Hutchings & Marchese, 1990; Lenth, 1990). According to the survey reported by Hutchings and Marchese (1990), two-thirds of the forty states actively promoting assessment have chosen this path including Colorado and Virginia. These authors further report that standardized tests are now generally being supplemented by "closer to the classroom" approaches such as interviews, institution-developed instruments, capstone exercises, portfolio review, satisfaction surveys, and the like.

State action to improve undergraduate education can affect curricula directly. In his review of state priorities, Lenth (1990) found that in 18 states, modifications of core and general education programs have been required at public institutions. These initiatives have not proven prescriptive, rather they are intended to define some of the core components of an undergraduate education and to ensure some uniformity in these elements in order to facilitate student transfer.

Fostering articulated programs of study across state systems of higher education has been a particular area of interest for state policmakers; as a result, statewide standards have been established to enable students completing similar programs at public institutions to be able to transfer, or having completed an associate degree, to move toward baccalaureate study with minimal problems. States with large public higher education systems, particularly with strong community college systems have been active in this area with action typically coming from statewide coordinating boards or through legislative action requiring greater articulation.

Sometimes, however, states go beyond the establishment of broad parameters for curriculum or assessment. Texas enacted legislation in 1987 requiring each institution of higher education to submit to its coordinating board a statement of the specific content, rationale, and objectives of its core curriculum. These would be reviewed by a statewide advisory committee who would then recommend exemplary educational objectives for the use of institutions in establishing core curriculum, including the number of semester hours that an institution should require for the satisfaction of degree requirements. To assure that institutions established and achieved the educational objectives, incentive funding was provided.

Continuing interest in both assessment and curriculum review is expected, particularly during leaner economic times when states look to institutions as important instruments for economic developed. Institutions will most certainly be asked to prove their success at promoting student achievement to maintain or secure additional funding. Having established workable partnerships in a number of states, it is unlikely that the trend toward institutionally-based, state-encouraged (or required) curriculum review and assessment programs will be reversed.

By Whom Is It to Be Taught? State action in this area is generally limited. Beyond the assurance of equal opportunity/affirmative action policies and minimal standards for hiring in the more highly centralized states, few actions are taken to limit an institution's or a faculty's ability to hire appropriate professional personnel. Generally, states have been more involved in deciding **who should be taught** and have established policies in recruitment, admissions, financial aid, retention and the like to influence who is taught by colleges and universities.

The one exception to this general rule has been the growing number of states with statute or regulation requiring english-language fluency for all instructional personnel. Borne of the increasing concern for the number (and concentration of foreign-born graduate teaching assistants in certain academic programs), efforts are being made by state policymakers to assure competence in communication. Typical is the intent of North Dakota's 1987 legislation: "Any person in a faculty or instructional position must exhibit proficiency in English. Institutions must provide special training or coursework to remedy any deficiencies."

It is perhaps surprising that with continued concern and debate over the need for greater emphasis on teaching, for bringing more senior faculty back into the classroom, and to limit the use of teaching assistants or part-time faculty, most statements in this area by policymakers are found in study or blue ribbon commission reports. Apart from statute or regulations governing hiring, rights, and compensation levels for part-time or teaching assistants (particularly in such large states as New York and California) little state action has been taken in this area.

How Should it be Taught? Like efforts to determine who should teach, state actions to shape how teaching is to occur are rather limited and their effects are generally indirect. Increased concern for the quality of instructional equipment has led states to modify funding formula to increase monies for the acquisition of equipment or new funding streams have been developed to assure that often-touted high technology equipment is made available. Interest in distance learning strategies and technologies is occurring in a number of states--those with large rural populations or those with increasing suburban cluster centers--which may shape both how and what is taught. Attractive to policymakers because they limit the investment in

buildings and increasing faculty size, they stand as the current model for increasing faculty (and institutional) productivity. To date, these efforts have had limited impact on teaching and learning directly.

Occasionally, statewide interests have focused directly on instructional improvement. Hoshmand and Hartman (1989) describe the process of the development implementation of faculty development program, required by the California State University system, following recommendations by the California Postsecondary Education Commission. Specifically, the system and each of its 17 institutions responded to a recommendation call for priority funding for faculty development efforts which were aimed at (1) improving instruction for students with diverse learning styles, (2) improving the faculty's ability to use new technologies, (3) developing new means of student outcomes assessment, (4) retraining faculty for teaching in a related field, and (5) providing release time and support for women and ethnic minority faculty to engage in scholarly activities (Hoshmand & Hartman, 1989, p. 33).

Other parties, interested in what is being taught and how are becoming active in the state policymaking arena for higher education. Action in Academia, a conservative group that would seek to eliminate "radical" values from being taught in the academy have recently been active in lobbying state and institutional leaders. As yet their efforts have been largely unsuccessful in directly changing how subjects will be taught. Their involvement in the state policymaking arena, particularly in those states with conservative majorities, may yet lead to direct state involvement.

Motivations for State Policy Initiatives

The motivations for state policy initiatives affecting teaching and learning are varied. Newman (1985) briefly described three areas of motivation for increasing interest in state action to promote quality. First, state policymakers have grown increasingly concerned about economic development and specifically the competitiveness of the workforce in a given state. The size, capacity, prestige of institutions, along with major employer assessments of the skills of graduates have figured large in concerns to improve the quality of education. Second, the

education reform movement has increased both the scrutiny of and expectations for educational institutions at all levels. Third, the uneasiness of many about continued claims of deterioration in student achievement, basic and higher order skills and standardized tests, has been expressed by state policymakers.

More recently, concerns about the perceived commitment of faculty to teaching and ultimately student achievement has motivated action in some states. Teaching loads, use and capabiltiy of teaching assistants, class sizes, and especially promotion and tenure policies are capturing the attention of state policymakers. There are those who suggest that if higher education--discussing the stranglehold of promotion and tenure systems which overvalue publication now for over a decade--cannot resolve to restore a more appropriate balance, other, outside forces may intervene to do so.

Finally, let us not forget the power of the individual in the political process. Actions undertaken because of constituent complaints can have a powerful effect on the classroom. The growing number of states with laws requiring institutions to assure the English language proficiency of all instructional personnel, including teaching assistants, can probably be traced to continuing constituent complaints about the ability to understand foreign-born teaching assistants in mathematics, science, engineering fields and related fields.

A Note on Unintended Outcomes

State policy initiatives designed to improve the quality of institutions and specifically to improve teaching and learning can have a variety of unintended outcomes. Setting aside the issue of whether actions in this area are appropriate or intrusive and thereby serve to erode institutional autonomy, unintended outcomes can occur.

First, efforts to improve quality--particularly those dependent on special appropriations--are susceptible to cuts or elimination before it can become institutionalized. Challenge grant monies in New Jersey, monies for eminent scholars in Virginia, and similar programs in other states are proving to be early casualties in states' budget battles. Additional cuts in the base budgets appropriated to colleges and universities in an increasing number of states may lead

to the elimination of many efforts designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The message is clear: **quality is worth pursuing when you can afford it, but during tough times, it is expendable.**

Second, states in their initiatives to promote both economic development and educational quality, establish two, often competing goals for institutions. While most efforts designed to promote economic development recognize the essential importance of a well-educated citizenry, research and technology-transfer efforts have proven more seductive to many policymakers. Efforts in the mid-eighties to replicate the success of Research Triangle, Silicon Valley, or Boston's Route 128 corridor captured for some time the imagination and monies of governors and legislators. As such, often contradictory goals are established for institutions: **(1) improve the quality of teaching and learning through focused effort in the classroom and (2) conduct research and provide services to outside constituencies.** Prestige and funding priorities are often associated more with the latter than the former, leading even "teaching" institutions to pursue research and service aims to the detriment of instructional quality. Seldin and Associates (1989) suggest that state funding priorities must be revised to all institutions, consistent with their missions, achieve similar levels of prestige and funding regardless of their emphasis on teaching or research.

Will State Action Succeed at Improving Teaching and Learning?

There can be no doubt that state actions are increasingly shaping the teaching and learning process in colleges and universities. Assessing all the direct and indirect actions to determine the ultimate success of such actions is virtually impossible. First, because the particular pattern of state involvement is unique to each state. Some programs--incentive funding, outcomes assessment, and the like--appear to hold great promise and some have even proven their effectiveness. Second, the variety of actions taken in the states, including formula funding, economic development initiatives, and the agendas set by a variety of officials, may mitigate the effects of targeted programs. Similarly, the characteristics of prestige pursued by institutions and by their faculty, still undervalue teaching (though Boyer's findings (1990) offer some hope).

Perhaps a better question would be: **Are state actions too intrusive?** But that question, too, is difficult to answer. Certainly governors, legislators, coordinating and governing boards are more involved in institutional affairs than ever before. Along with administrative and fiscal policies, academic decisions and academic policies are increasingly affected by state involvement. Whether that involvement has moved from procedural to substantive--or rather, whether substantive involvement has become intrusive--is a question which deserves further study.

Newman (1987) reminds us that in a 1957 decision, the Supreme Court defined what it deemed "the four essential freedoms of a university": to determine who may teach, to determine what may be taught, how it may be taught, and who may be admitted to study. Clearly, state action is infringing on the "rights" of a college or university in the absolute; but then the absolute has always been shaped by state actions. Are current efforts jeopardizing the integrity of higher education?

In conversation with those who direct statewide coordinating or governing boards, we are reminded by one such person that fundamental reform in higher education has typically come from external forces, particularly the federal government: the land grant movement emphasizing practical education, the G.I. Bill expanding access to higher education, and the like (ECS/SHEEO, 1989). The movement of states to ensure quality in the undergraduate program, to promote teaching and learning, and to hold institutions accountable for student achievement, may perhaps be one of the external forces with great positive impact on institutions.

To ensure institutional integrity while assertively promoting educational reform, the question becomes one of balance in the process while the answer is meaningful partnerships. Newman (1987) suggests that effective partnerships be forged between colleges and universities on the one hand and institutions on the other to enhance efforts aimed at improving teaching and learning. Similarly, Hines (1988) suggests that partnerships--that is "joint venture(s) where both entities seek ways to work together to achieve mutually desirable ends (p.103)"--are essential for the kind of productive relationships likely to further the quality of institutions and to retain institutional integrity.

Examples of such partnerships are occurring. In their review of the assessment movement, Hutchings and Marchese (1990) find that institutions, fearful of mandated statewide testing, have proven effective at convincing state leaders to establish broad parameters for assessment that enable institutions to develop unique and appropriate strategies to measure student progress and institutionalize responses to those measurements. Such a partnership of effort to improve instruction, has allowed states and institutions to think of their joint efforts as "institutional improvement" rather than "accountability."

Certainly the debate over whether state actions and initiatives will effectively reform the educational process and restore the centrality of teaching and learning in our colleges and universities remains to be seen. Whether such reform can be accomplished without inappropriate intrusion will also take time to discover. We can be certain that such efforts will continue and further, that a great potential exists for appropriate joint action.

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